Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0008] with the following amended paragraph:

A1

[0008] To combat the problems associated with merely extending one of the expansion buses of the notebook computer, some computer manufacturers place a bus bridge circuit within the docking station. In this way, the physical or protocol driven constraints as to the number of devices coupled to the bus can be increased significantly. As the technology of the docking station increases, it becomes important to ~~insure~~ ensure that the notebook computer is itself compatible with the hardware present in the docking station.

Please replace paragraph [0009] with the following amended paragraph:

A2

[0009] It is also common across families of notebook computers that each of the notebooks in the family may be capable of docking with multiple docking stations. In other words, it is not necessary that the notebook computer dock only with one particular docking station. Some computer manufacturers also support docking newer models of notebook computers with older docking stations. While these capabilities create many options for the computer system user, they also create problems for computer manufacturers with regard to ~~insuring~~ ensuring that a particular notebook can dock with a particular docking station without damaging either of those devices. The problem is exacerbated in that in some cases a notebook may dock with a particular docking station, but with limited functionality, possibly because that docking station or the notebook needs software updates.

Please replace paragraph [0035] with the following amended paragraph:

A3

[0035] Referring now to Figure 3, once the product code and ROM date are transferred via the I^2C bus 84 to the notebook computer 200 (block 20), software executed in the notebook computer 200 makes an initial determination as to whether the notebook is compatible with the docking station based on the

information that represent a products code of the docking station (block 22). Preferably, the software is executed in the Super I/O 74 (also known as a keyboard controller), but the software could likewise execute in the CPU 50 or any other CPU or micro-controller of the system. If the two devices are incompatible, the decision process ends and the quick switches 86 for the PCI bus are not closed (blocks 24 and 36). Thus, the notebook computer operates stand alone (not docked to the docking station) or boots up in a stand-alone mode. If, however, the docking station and the notebook computer are compatible, the notebook software next determines whether the ROM date is sufficiently new to enable at least minimum functionality between the notebook 200 and the docking station 300 (block 26). Thus, and still referring to Figure 3, the ROM date is compared to the minimum date in the table stored in the ROM 70 associated with that particular product code. If the ROM date is equal to or later than the minimum required date, then as far as the notebook computer is concerned, the quick switches 86 may be closed. If the ROM date is later than the preferred date stored in the table (indicating maximum functionality between the notebook 200 and docking station 300), no further action is taken (apart from electrically coupling the buses via the quick switches 86) (block 30). If, however, the ROM date of the docking station 300 lies between the minimum date and the preferred date (blocks 26 and 28), the software preferably closes the quick switches (block 32) and ~~take~~ takes the additional step of notifying the user that while at least minimum functionality between the notebook and the docking station may take place, there needs to be an update to the ROM of the docking station completed (block 34). This update could be by inserting a new ROM device, or it could be connecting to an appropriate internet site, downloading the new software for the docking station, and installing that new software using utilities known to those of ordinary skill in the art.

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Please replace paragraph [0039] with the following amended paragraph:

[0039] The above discussion is meant to be illustrative of the principles and various embodiments of the present invention. Numerous variations and modifications will become apparent to those skilled in the art once the above disclosure is fully appreciated. For example, now understanding why and when to notify a user that updates may be required, one of ordinary skill could easily devise a system where the user is prompted only ~~one~~ once (*e.g.*, by setting a bit in the system that indicates the user has already been notified), or where the user is prompted periodically (*e.g.*, once a week). Further in the situation where multiple notebook computers dock to a single docking station, also known as "hoteling," one of ordinary skill could easily devise a system that keeps track of which of the multiple notebook computers has been docked, and which ones require updates. It is intended that the following claims be interpreted to embrace all such variations and modifications.